

# DJ Rick Stephenson tells experiences of radio occupation

By Kevin L. Hoover

What does Rick Stephenson say when people ask his occupation? "It depends on where I am and who's asking," he replies with characteristic frankness.

The moustachioed DJ, besides being a part-time instructor at Ohlone's radio station, KOHL, also works at Oakland's premier country-western station, KNEW.

"Actually," he says, "I don't mention my radio work unless my voice or name are recognized. Sometimes people develop an image of you from your voice over the air, and the reality never quite lives up to the illusion."

In just seven years, Rick, still in his 20s, has become a recognized air personality in the Bay Area. His lightning rise to success was by no means easy, however.

Radio novices have little voice in the determination of salary or working conditions, and when a station changes its format or replaces its manager, young DJ's often find themselves pounding the pavement.

Rick recalls working at a station made out of a reconditioned quanset hut. Not only was the dilapidated structure falling apart, but one had to check for the presence of rabbit-sized rats on the front porch before going outside.

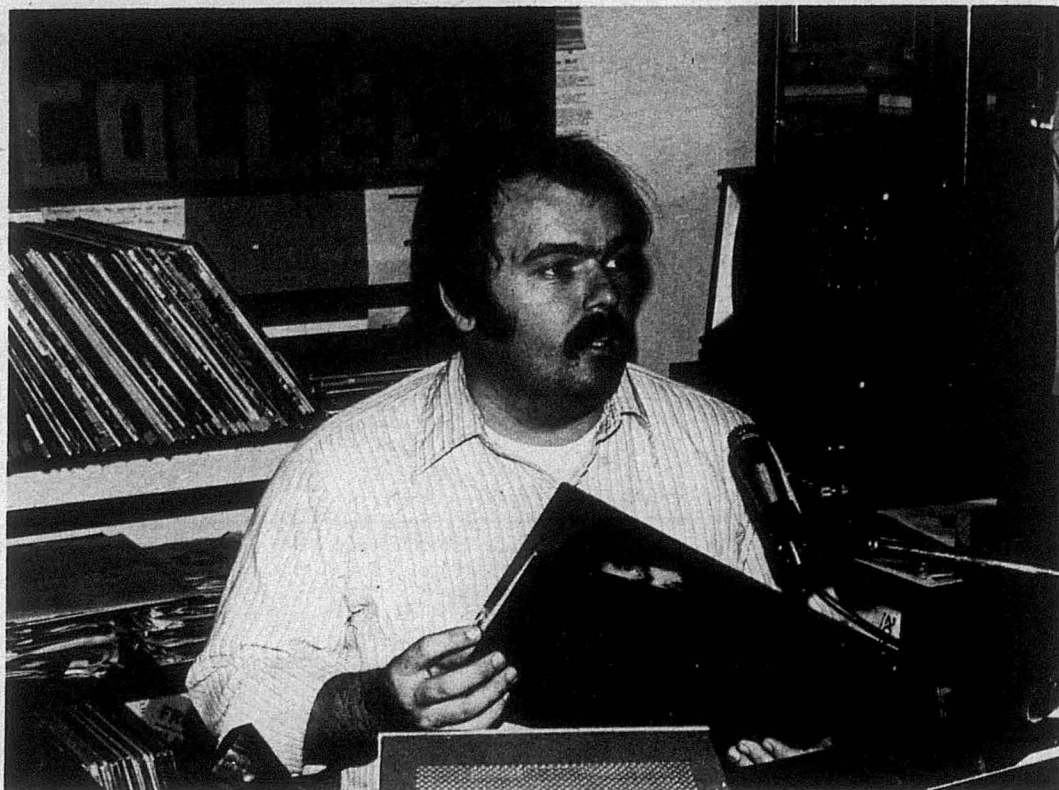
Another time, he moved to Redding to take a job at a station there, only to be hired and fired the same day. That was over a salary dispute—the amount promised over the phone was retracted which later resulted in the manager's being fired for sub rosa money shennanigans.

Despite being the member of an inherently problematical profession, Rick likes radio and relishes its challenges. And his talents are ideally suited to them. His smooth, easygoing voice sounds good over the car speakers.

This, coupled with considerable music knowledge and a flair for production, has earned Rick the respect of his radio colleagues and listeners alike. A Rick Stephenson production is typically clear in message, logical in flow and clever in execution.

Where can a successful young DJ go from here? "I want to continue to teach," says Rick purposefully, "although someday I'd like to own my own station."

A sizeable vision indeed, even for a radio prodigy. But with fewer and fewer left to conquer, it's a safe bet that Rick Stephenson will one day realize his ultimate ambition.



Rick Stevenson attempts a feat of endurance as he sits behind the mike for 73 grueling hours in an attempt to raise money for the radio club. Photo by Denise Butterfield

## 'I thought it would be easy

By Betty Ostrov

It's the 21st hour of a 73-hour KOHL radio marathon. Disc jockey Rick Stevens is already wishing he were back home.

"I would have backed out, but it was already too late. They had an articles in the Argus and the Monitor. Yesterday (Monday) there was a Tribune photographer here, so here I am."

The three-day radiothon (beginning Monday and ending at 1 p.m. yesterday) was an attempt to raise

money for the KOHL radio club. Two years ago a similar effort raised \$350. This year the goal was \$600, but by the second day Stevens said he was just hoping to "break even."

Although Stevens says a radiothon is not something one can practice for, he trained by working at KNEW for 28 hours over the weekend and eating a "special diet" of spaghetti dinners and Jumbo Jacks.

"When I did this two years ago, it was fun from the standpoint that

I thought it would be easy," says Stevens, referring to his last KOHL radio marathon.

"This year I know exactly what I'm going to face," he continues. "I know that at about 2 p.m. this afternoon I'm going to start hallucinating. I'm not looking forward to it, but it's something I have to go through."

According to Stevens the last night is the hardest. "I'm really tired, there's nobody around here, no bodies. As soon as someone walks in, I get wired."

As for his ability to play records in his condition, Stevens said that be the second night he would "grab a record, put it on and say 'Here we go folks.' I'll take records off in the middle of them. I'll take one record off and put another on just for the heck of it." Enough said.

As to whether or not he would do a radiothon again next year. "Hell no! No way on Earth. Of course, I said that two years ago."

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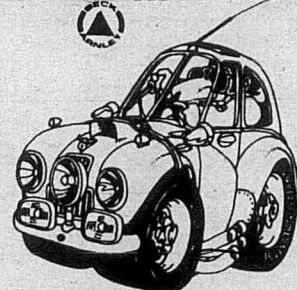
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